

127 writers, and this is particularly true of that part of the work dealing with customs like war which are now obsolete or obsolescent but could be made subjects of direct observation at the time in which they wrote. I have also made liberal use of the material published in recent years by Prof. Frank G. Speck, of the University of Pennsylvania, particularly his paper on "The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town" (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, vol. II, pt. 2). His more extensive work on the Yuchi has been mentioned only incidentally, as the Yuchi are an alien tribe incorporated into the Creek Confederacy in comparatively modern times. Their culture, however, presents numerous features resembling that found among the Creeks, and Professor Speck's paper (Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians, Anthropological Publications of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, vol. I, no. 1) should be read in conjunction with the material here presented. The valuable and hitherto unpublished Hitchcock material was placed at the disposal of the Bureau of Ethnology through the kindness of Mrs. W. A. Croffut, General Hitchcock's niece.

174 The following peculiar phonetic signs are used: i, unvoiced i; a, obscure a; tc, English ch; c, English sh; ", nasalization of the preceding vowel; x and ɣ (in Natchez), palatal and velar spirants; vowels generally have continental values.

NATIVE LEGENDS DEALING WITH CREEK HISTORY

ORIGIN LEGENDS

173 The origin myths of the Hitchiti and Alabama, minor components of the Creek Nation, have been given in Bulletin 73.¹ Here it is proposed to include the origin myths of the dominant tribe, that which constituted by far the largest portion numerically and from which came the crystallizing force which united them all into one political body. Who the Muskogee were and what towns they occupied has been explained in the bulletin above mentioned. The origin legend, or the origin legends, of these people differed to some extent in the several Muskogee towns, but there was a harmony between the various versions, perhaps brought on *pari passu* with the progressive unification of the confederacy. There are many references to this legend in very general terms, but several stories have survived, which, though usually fragmentary, shed most valuable light upon the nature of the original. The earliest of these legends is that given to Governor Oglethorpe by one Chekili,² who is styled "emperor of the Upper and Lower Creeks," and was probably a Kasihta. At any rate the legend seems to be from Kasihta sources. According to the American Gazetteer, as quoted by Gatschet, "This speech was curiously written in red and black characters, on the skin of a

¹ Swanton, Early Hist. Creek Inds., Bull. 73, Bur. Amer. Ethn., pp. 173-174, 191-192.

² Perhaps from Tsalaki Siltet, "Cherokee killer."

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young buffalo, and translated into English, as soon as delivered. . . . The said skin was set in a frame, and hung up in the Georgia Office, in Westminster."* Of course this means that pictures had been made on the blanket similar to those in the Delaware Walam Olum, to mark the various important events narrated by the speaker. It has unfortunately been lost, along with the accompanying English text, but a German translation of the English was preserved, and from this Doctor Gatschet had the legend rendered again into English and also into Creek for his "Migration Legend of the Creek Indians." This version, including one or two corrections made by Doctor Gatschet in one of his personal copies of the work, is as follows:

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"WHAT CHEKILLI, THE HEAD-CHIEF OF THE UPPER AND LOWER CREEKS SAID, IN A TALK HELD AT SAVANNAH, ANNO 1735, AND WHICH WAS HANDED OVER BY THE INTERPRETER, WRITTEN UPON A BUFFALO-SKIN WAS, WORD FOR WORD, AS FOLLOWS:

"[Speech, which, in the year 1735, was delivered at Savannah, in Georgia, by]† Chekilli, Emperor of the Upper and Lower Creeks; Antiche, highest Chief of the town of the Cowetas, Eliche, King; Ousta, Head-chief of the Cussitaws, Tomechaw, War King; Wali, War-captain of the Palachucolas, Poepiche, King; Tomehuichi, Dog-king of the Euchitaws; Mittakawye, Head War-chief of the Okonees, Tuwechiche, King; Whoyauni, Head War-chief of the Chehaws and of the Hokmulge Nation; Stimelacoweche, King of the Osoches; Opithli, King of the Jawocolos [Sawokli]; Ewenauki, King; Tahmokmi, War-captain of the Eufantees [misprint for Eufalees‡]; and thirty other Warriors.§

"At a certain time the Earth opened in the West, where its mouth is. The Earth opened and the Cussitaws came out of its mouth, and settled near by. But the Earth became angry and ate up their children; therefore, they moved further West. A part of them, however, turned back, and came again to the same place where they had been, and settled there. The greater number remained behind, because they thought it best to do so. Their children, nevertheless, were eaten by the Earth, so that, full of dissatisfaction, they journeyed toward the sunrise.

"They came to a thick, muddy, slimy river—came there, camped there, rested there, and stayed over night there. The next day, they continued their journey and came, in one day, to a red, bloody river. They lived by this river, and ate of its fishes for two years;

* Gatschet, Creek Mig. Leg., vol. 1, p. 206.

† This bracketing is copied from Gatschet.

‡ The following transliterations and translations of a part of these names were furnished by the late G. W. Grayson and A. S. Gatschet: Anstitel, to wound; Ilitel, to kill, or putting something down; Osta, four (7); Tomesca, (a number of creatures) flying; Wali, from wabali, south (though Gatschet suggests the name of the coast province of Georgia, Guale, see Bull. 73, Bur. Amer. Ethn., p. 80 et seq.); Poepiche, to come to win; Hoyahani, to pass by; Stimelakostel, somebody having caused something to come; Hopili, dog.

number of notches in them and each day the man in charge cut one notch out. At other times notches were made instead of being cut out, especially when the future date was indefinite.¹⁰ I have seen this method employed on the north Pacific coast. Eakins saw still another method in use among the Creeks in recording the days of the week. This consisted of a series of holes made in a board into which a peg was inserted.¹¹

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A third and particularly important method is mentioned by Adair. It was the use of cords on which were a definite number of knots. The time was determined by untying one of these knots each day, or perhaps by tying it, similarly to the usage in the case of notches. They employed all these devices not merely to keep run of the days but of the months and years as well, and Adair says of the last: "They count certain very remarkable things, by knots of various colours and make, after the manner of the South-American Aborigines."¹² Of course Adair is referring to the famous quipu of Peru, and it is very interesting to find that our southern tribes had a similar mnemonic system, especially as he implies that this was used to some extent to mark important events in past history. Adair's statement also serves to confirm an analogous assertion by Milfort, except that, according to the latter, beads strung on threads took the place of knots. Still there is no good reason why both devices should not have been employed. The idea once established would have seized upon any convenient means of expression. Milfort's statement runs thus:

"Since my arrival among the Creeks the old chiefs had often spoken to me of their ancestors, and they had shown me the belts (banderoles), or species of chaplets, which contained their histories. These chaplets were their archives; they are of little seeds like those which are called Cayenne pearls; they are of different colors and strung in rows; and it is on their arrangement and their pattern that their meaning depends. As only the principal events are preserved on these belts and without any details, it sometimes happens that a single chaplet contains the history of twenty to twenty-five years. These pearls are placed in such a manner as to preserve the various periods exactly; and each year is easily distinguished by those who know the arrangement."¹³

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It furthermore appears from the speech of Chekilli to Governor Oglethorpe painted on a bison skin¹⁴ that pictorial mnemonics or "picture writing" was known.

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¹⁰ Adair, *Hist. Am. Inds.*, p. 73.

¹¹ Schoolcraft, *Ind. Tribes*, vol. 1, p. 273.

¹² Adair, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹³ Milfort, *Mémoire*, pp. 47-48. Such devices were in use also among the tribes of the Carolinas and Virginia.

¹⁴ See p. 22.

• 212 These facts all tend to show that the Creeks anciently had made some endeavors to record their history and serve to strengthen our respect for certain of the features of their migration legends. It will also prevent us from dismissing as an altogether idle tale De la Vente's assertion that the Natchez had preserved a record of 45 or 50 of their Great Suns.¹⁵ At the best the attempts were, of course, crude, but in Peru the device of the quipu seems to have preserved a great amount of extremely valuable history extending to a remote antiquity.

436 Before white contact value was measured by means of shell money, but we have not from the southern Indians as full an account of this as from the northern Indians. The following from Adair contains nearly all that we know about it:

"Before we supplied them with our European beads, they had great quantities of wampum; (the Buccinum of the ancients) made out of conch-shell, by rubbing them on hard stones, and so they form them according to their liking. With these they bought and sold at a stated current rate, without the least variation for circumstances either of time or place; and now they will hear nothing patiently of loss or gain, or allow us to heighten the price of our goods, be our reasons ever so strong, or though the exigencies and changes of time may require it. Formerly, four deer-skins was the price of a large conch-shell bead, about the length and thickness of a man's forefinger; which they fixed to the crown of their head, as an high ornament—so greatly they valued them."¹⁶

GAMES

526 As with so many other American tribes, the two-goal ball game, resembling in many respects that known as lacrosse, was the leading game among southern Indians. I will begin an account of it by prefixing Adair's description as he witnessed it among the Chickasaw, though the Creek game as it has come down to us differed in several important particulars. He says:

[525] "The Indians are much addicted to gaming, and will often stake every thing they possess. Ball-playing is their chief and most favourite game; and is such severe exercise, as to shew it was originally calculated for a hardy and expert race of people, like themselves, and the ancient Spartans. The ball is made of a piece of scraped deer-skin, moistened, and stuffed hard with deer's hair, and strongly sewed with deer's sinews. The ball-sticks are about two feet long, the lower end somewhat resembling the palm of a hand, and which are worked with deer-skin thongs. Between these, they catch the ball, and throw it a great distance, when not prevented by some of the opposite party, who fly to intercept them. The goal is about

¹⁵ *Compte Rendu Cong. Internat. des Amér.*, 19th sess., vol. 1, p. 37.

¹⁶ Adair, *Hist. Am. Inds.*, p. 176. Cf. also Lawson, *Hist. Car.*, pp. 315-317. The use of the term "wampum" here is erroneous; wampum was of a wholly different type.